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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000383

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/A (REOTT)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/31/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#) [NATO](#) [PK](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AU](#)  
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN VIEWS ON AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN STRATEGIC  
REVIEW

REF: A. STATE 29482  
[1](#)B. VIENNA 359

Classified by: Economic-Political Counselor J. Dean Yap for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) In response to reftel A, and following up on reftel B conversation between Charge and Austrian PolDir Lehne, Econ/Pol Counselor and Polchief met March 30 with Bruno Bilek, MFA Deputy Director for East Asia and the Pacific. E/P Couns stressed that while the media had been focusing on the increased U.S. troop deployments to Afghanistan, the civilian elements of the new U.S. strategy were at least as important. In addition to sending hundreds of additional civilian personnel to Afghanistan, the U.S. also plans to expand the Afghan police force to 82,000 officers. The U.S. will also provide Afghanistan with USD 1.5 billion per year for five years in civil reconstruction assistance.

[1](#)2. (U) E/P Couns noted that Austrian FM Spindelegger said publicly March 30 that Austria should be prepared to make a "concrete offer" of support for the Afghanistan mission at the upcoming U.S.-EU Summit. Spindelegger said the offer could include training for police and judges outside of Afghanistan, and/or mine clearing support. Bilek said the GOA had been discussing these options, as well as agricultural training, which could include alternative crop cultivation for poppy growers and/or arid zone forestry. He told us he was somewhat surprised by the forward-leaning nature of Spindelegger's comments, but said decisions are now being made at the political level, so MFA staff do not have the latest information. E/P Couns stressed that training provided inside Afghanistan would likely be more efficient and effective than training outside the country. Bilek said the GOA was reluctant to send personnel to Afghanistan, but agricultural or mine clearing experts might be deployed for short stints in country.

[1](#)3. (C) In response to queries, Bilek noted that the MFA was in discussion with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) about Afghanistan, but stressed the difficulty of making short-term changes in ADA programs, which would require parliamentary approval.  
KILNER